

VZCZCXRO8166  
OO RUEHROV  
DE RUEHJM #1259/01 1981041  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 161041Z JUL 08  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2139  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEADWD/DA WASHINGTON DC//DAS-ZD/DACS-ZK//  
RUEAHQA/CSAF WASHINGTON DC//POLAD//  
RHMFIUU/CMC WASHINGTON DC  
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC//POLAD//  
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 7207  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4192  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 4045  
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 5543  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 3961  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2526

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 001259

SIPDIS

STATE PASS BBG  
STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD  
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR ABRAMS  
CMC WASHINGTON DC FOR POLAD

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD  
LONDON FOR HKANONA AND POL - TSOU  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAO](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (7/16): "HAS THE WORLD BECOME  
RESIGNED TO PALESTINIAN SUFFERING?"

-----  
Main Stories:  
-----

The prisoners' exchange deal between Hizbollah and Israel dominates front page coverage in all dailies. All papers run over-sized lead photos: Al-Quds shows Lebanese trucks decorated with flowers, standing ready to receive the remains of Lebanese prisoners along with an in-set photo of Palestinian fighter Dalal Al-Mughraby in military dress; Al-Ayyam highlights a photo of a man hanging a poster of Al-Mughraby in southern Lebanon; Al-Hayat Al-Jadida runs the same photo, next to a poster of Lebanese prisoner, Samir Al-Kuntar. The papers outline the details of the exchange and note that Al-Mughraby may be returned as one of the "unidentified bodies." Coverage says that Lebanon has declared July 16 as a national holiday to welcome the return of the prisoners.

All front pages highlight reactions to the July 14 decision by the Israeli Supreme Court to evict Palestinian tenants from a home in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. The Palestinian Authority President's office complained on July 15 to the Quartet and Washington about the decision which comes after a protracted legal battle, according to coverage. Al Quds quotes a Palestinian official stating that the United States sent U.S. Consulate General staff to the neighborhood to review the situation. The Palestinian official also confirmed that the Consulate representative was given a letter by residents addressed to President Bush, requesting that Bush stop, "the humanitarian disaster."

The cancellation of Quartet Representative Tony Blair's July 15 visit to Gaza is front page news. Blair said in an interview with Al-Quds that he has decided to delay, not cancel, his visit because of several credible security threats against him. Blair added that the political situation in Israel will make it difficult for parties

to reach a peace agreement by the end of the year. Blair also confirmed that he has discussed recent Israeli Defense Force operations in the West Bank cities of Nablus and Janin with Israeli officials.

Al-Quds highlights news that Chief Palestinian negotiator, Ahmad Quray and PLO negotiator Sa'eb Erekat have departed for Washington to meet with Secretary Rice. The two Palestinian officials intend to brief Rice about, "the latest developments in the Palestinian Territories."

Israeli authorities have begun the transformation of a historically Islamic cemetery in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Bab-Al-Rahma into a public garden, according to Al Quds' front page. The paper quotes Sheikh Abu Sheikha, head of the Al Aqsa institution which works for the restoration of Jerusalem Islamic Holy sites, who warns, "against this Israeli attack [and] ... judaization plan." Controversy over the plans began more than 1 and half years ago when Muslims were barred by Israeli authorities from entering the cemetery to visit relatives' graves. Israel claims that the site contains historic Jewish ruins that will be incorporated into the garden that is situated near the Al Aqsa mosque compound, Al Quds reports.

Al-Ayyam continues coverage on Palestinian national dialogue: The paper's front page quotes Fatah representative Jibril Al-Rjub in an exclusive July 15 interview, confirming that dialogue will begin under Arab sponsorship in Egypt in August 2008. In related coverage, the paper reports that Hamas leader, Mahmud Al-Zahhar emphasized that Palestinian national dialogue will be delayed, "until further notice due to external pressures." Al-Zahhar added

JERUSALEM 00001259 002 OF 002

that priority should instead be given to the issues of reopening the Gaza-Egypt Rafah crossing point, the possible prisoners' exchange deal between Hamas and Israel, and stabilizing the truce in the Gaza Strip.

Al-Quds runs the full text of Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama's, "My Plan for Iraq" on page two. Citing the New York Times, the paper runs the piece next to a photo of Obama. U.S. policy towards Iraq is also the topic of Al-Hayat Al-Jadida's political cartoon which shows Iraq personified as a headless man in a black suit, handing his head on a platter to Uncle Sam. The cartoon is entitled, "the Iraqi Government allows investment in Iraq's oil sector."

-----  
BLOCK QUOTES:  
-----

1. Al-Quds prints its daily editorial entitled, "A call on the international community to halt Israeli actions." Everyday Israel performs acts of tyranny [against Palestinians] such as destroying houses, confiscating land or insisting on building barriers in the middle of farming villages that prevent people from reaching their fields and from communicating with their relatives... and all of this happens right in front of the international 'family', especially our brothers, the Arab countries... The 'siege' on the Gaza Strip continues and dozens of sick Palestinians are dying because of a lack of medicine or from being barred from treatment abroad. This does not faze Arab or foreign officials, while the act of detaining one prisoner in any of the other five continents shakes the consciousness of the world... The question is: Have the international community and our Arab brothers become apathetic and resigned to... continued Israeli tyranny against the Palestinians?... [Even though] it is the role of the international community and our Arab brothers to push Israel to stop its actions and end the occupation and settlement activities..."

2. Al-Ayyam runs an editorial by Hamada Fara'nah, entitled, "Syrian success in employing regional issues [to increase diplomatic clout]" (7/15): "...Syria [openly] seeks to continue negotiations with Tel Aviv under U.S. sponsorship. Syria has also contributed to the success of the Qatari mediation at the Doha conference [on Palestinian reunification] and facilitated the election of the Lebanese president and thereby the Paris Mediterranean summit, with

the participation of Al-Assad, Sulayman, the Qatari prince and Sarkozy... Damascus has welcomed Abu Mazin and the truce agreement between Hamas and Israel... so, Syria [is clearly skilled at leveraging its diplomatic clout].

Lapenn